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DE RUEHBJ #6531 0961331  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 061331Z APR 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2312  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0174  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0195  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1919  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0616  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 006531

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: FOLLOWING PALESTINE/ISRAEL MUTUAL RECOGNITION  
TAGS: PREL PTER KPAL IS CH  
SUBJECT: PRC/HAMAS: BEIJING BACKS OFF INVITE BUT LEAVES  
WIGGLE ROOM

REF: A. A) OSC CPP20060406042041 B)BEIJING 6348 C)

¶B. BEIJING 6530

Classified By: Classified by DCM David Sedney. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) MFA Spokesman Liu Jianchao's announcement at the regular MFA press briefing that "there is no plan for Foreign Minister Zahar to visit China" (ref C) leaves open the possibility of a visit at a later date. This followed an earlier statement to AFP that "as far as we know, China at the present stage does not have such a plan yet (ref A)."

¶2. (C) Israeli Embassy DCM Eyal Propper told us that Israeli Ambassador Yehuda Haim delivered a strong protest to the MFA Acting Director General for West Asian and North African Affairs Qian Xiaodong on April ¶6. Qian used the Spokesman's language in his response and then indicated that Israel should not worry too much about the reports that Zahar will visit China in May in conjunction with his trip to Indonesia to participate in a conference. Propper's assessment is that the May visit will not happen but that Beijing will probably invite a Palestinian representative at some later point, though perhaps not Zahar.

¶3. (C) We were unable to speak April 6 with anyone in the West Asian and North African Affairs Department's Israel and Palestine Division. Poloff reiterated to North American Affairs Department U.S. Division Deputy Director Ren Faqiang the strong U.S. concerns about an invitation to HAMAS and noted that the Spokesman's statement that there are no plans for Zahar to visit contains more ambiguity than we would like. Ren said the PRC understands the U.S. position but that he was not authorized to say anything beyond the Spokesman's statement. In a separate April 6 conversation, MFA Director for Korean Peninsula Affairs Yang Jian (strictly protect) told Poloff she had heard discussion within the MFA to the effect that West Asian and North African Department officials had been harshly criticized for allowing reports of an invitation to Zahar to surface in the run-up to President Hu's visit to the United States.

¶4. (C) We will keep reminding PRC officials of the importance of this issue.

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